

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.... A

SECRET

February 8, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*

SUBJECT: Statistics on Enemy Manpower and Supplies

At Tab A is a summary of the statistics (converted to pounds) developed by CIA in response to your call to Mr. Helms yesterday.

At Tab B is the actual CIA report prepared by Mr. Helms. I am providing copies of both enclosures to Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ziegler for use in connection with Lam Son 719.

Attachments

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MORI/CDF C05076596

SECRET

SUMMARY OF ENEMY MANPOWER AND SUPPLIES  
ENTERING SOUTH VIETNAM THROUGH THE HO  
CHI MINH TRAIL SINCE 1965

**Manpower:**

-- At least 630,000 North Vietnamese troops

**Foodstuffs:**

-- At least 200 million pounds

**Weapons:**

-- In excess of 400,000 weapons of all types

**Ammunition:**

~~-- Over 100 million pounds of ammunition or the equivalent of over  
600 million rounds of ammunition~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

This is the paper the President asked for yesterday concerning the number of men and amount of supplies which moved down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

The figures on supplies we believe to be "credible estimates". They are not as solid as the ones on manpower infiltration.

*Dick*  
Richard Helms

Attachment - 1

8 February 1971  
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED:

(47)

The Significance of the Ho Chi Minh Trail

For over a decade the Communists have made extensive use of the territory of South Laos as a major route for the infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam. This elaborate logistics system--the so-called Ho Chi Minh trail--consists of more than 1,500 miles of roads and elaborate trail networks. It is manned by some 40,000-50,000 logistic troops plus supporting security and defense forces.

Over the last five years the Communists have used the Ho Chi Minh trail to infiltrate at least 630,000 North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam. At the same time this system, along with an elaborate supply route through Cambodia, was used to move the weapons and ammunition needed to keep the war going in South Vietnam. Since 1965 on the order of 100,000 tons of foodstuffs were moved through Laos for Communist forces. The number of weapons shipped to South Vietnam over the Ho Chi Minh trail during the last five years is well in excess or the equivalent of 600 million rounds of 400,000. Some 50,000 tons of ammunition were also shipped through Laos.

The volume of supplies moving through the Ho Chi Minh trail was also supplemented by an elaborate supply system through Cambodia which, since 1967, was used to

meet the logistic requirements of Communist forces in southern South Vietnam.

Since the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk the Communists have become almost completely dependent on the Ho Chi Minh trail to move men and supplies into South Vietnam. If this supply system can be denied to the Communists, or at least effectively disrupted, their ability to launch major and widespread offensive campaigns in South Vietnam will be significantly curtailed.